Intermediate items like vegetable oils already exempted from excise duty are also exempted from 4% Special Additional Duty (SAD) of Customs. Texturised Vegetable Proteins (Soya bari) and ready-to-eat packaged food also exempted.

No Excise duty on biscuits whose retail price does not exceed Rs 100 per kg. All kinds of food mixes inclduing instant mixes, condensed milk, ice cream, preparations of meat, fish and poultry, pectin, pasta and yeast, packaged coconut water, tea and coffee pre-mixes, puffed rice and milk containing edible nuts with sugar or other intergradient are excise exempt.

To encourage Cold Chain facilities, excise duty exempted, on end use basis, on refrigeration equipment (consisting of compressor, condensor units evaporator etc) above 2 TR (Tonne Refrigeration) utilising power of 50 KW or above.

Excise duty reduced from 16% to 8% on OTS Cans, Aseptic Bage & Aseptic Packaging Paper and Breakfast Cereals.

Only Sugar, Malt Products, Chocolates, Cocoa products etc. attract excise duty.

Customs Duty

Customs Duty on Bactrofuges reduced from 7.5% to NIL. Most of the Cold Chain equipments like refeer vans already exempted from Customs Duty.

Income Tax

Under the Income Tax Act, 100% tax holiday on profit for first five years and 25% of profits for the next five years in case of new agro processing industries set up to process, preserve and package fruits and vegetables.

Others

All Services provided by Technology Business Incubators exempted from Service Tax. Similarly, their Incubates whose annual business turnover does not exceed Rs. 50 lakhs exempted from service tax for the first three years.

To promote outsourcing of research, weighted deduction of 125% on payments made to companies engaged in R&D.

Food processing units in Punjab

936. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases for setting up of new units and expansion of the existing units for

food processing in Punjab, pending with the Central Government as on 1st March 2008, category-wise; and

(b) by when clearnance in each case is likely to be accorded?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (b) 58 proposals seeking assistance from the Government for setting up of new units and expansion/modernization of existing food processing units in Punjab in the sectors of bakery products, fruits & vegetable processing milk processing, oil and rice milling are at various stages of processing. Consequent on decentralization of processing and disbursement of grant under the scheme through banks and financial institutions, the pending applications have been sent to the concerned banks from which the units have taken term loan for sanction and disbursement of grant under the scheme. Necessary funds are also being provided to the banks for disbursement of grant to these units.

Survey on primary education

†937. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently completed a survey with regard to the primary education and upper primary education;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the rate of admission in the primary classes of the children belonging to the minority communities has declined particularly during the last year;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the efforts made by Government to increase the rate of admission and to check the dropping out in primary and upper primary classes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) National University of Educational Planning & Administration collects data annually through District Information System for Education (DISE) which covers schools up to elementary level. DISE 2006-07 has for the first time included the figures on enrolment of Muslim children. It reveals that present share of their enrolment at primary level is 9.39%. Since the data on Muslim children has been collected th.ough DISE for the fist time, comparions cannot be made;

(e) A multi-pronged approach has been adpoted under SSA for enhancing enrolment and reducing dropout rates. The interventions include, *inter-alia,* strengthening of shools and improving the quallity of education through improvement in shool infrastructure, recruitment of additional techers, annual school grants, regular training of teachers, academic support to teachers. In addition, SSA also aims at community support, flexible schooling for children who are dropouts, older children or children in difficult circumstances, and special provisions to promote education of girls, children form disadvantaged sections of society of children with special needs.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.